

LOUISIANA

COASTAL PROTECTION & RESTORATION AUTHORITY INTEGRATED PLANNING TEAM

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Coastal Protection and Restoration for the Future of Louisiana

Because of the devastation of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Louisiana Legislature, this past December, through Act 8 of the First Extraordinary Session of 2005, restructured the State's Wetland Conservation and Restoration Authority, to form the Coastal Protection and Restoration Authority (CPRA). This act expanded the membership, duties, and responsibilities and charged it to develop and implement a comprehensive coastal protection plan, including both a master plan and annual plans.

Prior to the hurricanes, safeguarding Louisiana's coast meant separate planning for hurricane protection and coastal restoration. Act 8 directed that the CPRA consider both "hurricane protection and the protection, conservation, restoration, and enhancement of coastal wetlands and barrier shorelines or reefs" and further defined the "coastal area" as the Louisiana Coastal Zone and contiguous areas that are subject to storm or tidal surge. In time for submission to the May 2006 legislative session, the CPRA completed its first assigned task – the first annual coastal protection plan for the state that integrates both hurricane protection and coastal restoration projects.

The CPRA is now established as the single state agency with authority to articulate a clear statement of priorities and to focus development and implementation efforts to achieve comprehensive coastal protection for Louisiana. The CPRA is working closely with other entities on coastal issues, including the state legislature, the Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Protection, Restoration, and Conservation; the Louisiana Recovery Authority (LRA); and the LRA's Louisiana Speaks regional planning process led by Calthorpe Associates.

The Governor's executive assistant for coastal activities chairs the CPRA. Agencies in the CPRA membership include the following: the secretaries of the Department of Natural Resources (DNR); the Department of Transportation and Development (DOTD); the Department of Environmental Quality; the Department of Wildlife and Fisheries; the Department of Economic Development; the commissioners of the Department of Agriculture and Forestry; the Department of Insurance; and the Division of Administration; the director of the state Office of Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness; and the chair of the Governor's Advisory Commission on Coastal Protection, Restoration, and Conservation. Additionally, the CPRA membership includes two executive board members of the Police Jury Association of Louisiana and three levee district presidents from coastal Louisiana.

As charged by Act 8, the CPRA also established an Integrated Planning Team (IPT) to jointly coordinate development of the master plan with state and federal agencies, as well as political subdivisions (including levee districts). The IPT consists of senior staff from DNR and DOTD. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, New Orleans District, has also assigned a senior staff person to the team as a liaison.

Utilizing extensive existing work as well as input from a wide variety of stakeholders, the Integrated Planning Team is formulating an overall master plan that clearly portrays the state's needs and desires relative to a sustainable vision of comprehensive coastal protection integrating hurricane protection and coastal restoration. The master plan will address these coastal protection efforts from both short-term and long-range perspectives. It will also incorporate structural, management, and institutional components of both efforts. A draft of the master plan is targeted to be available in October 2006 for public review and comment.



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CPRA Integrated Planning Team Newsletter June 2006
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IPT Workshops on Coastal Protection

On May 1, 2006, over one hundred coastal professionals participated in the CPRA's Integrated Planning Team (IPT) workshop addressing hurricane protection and coastal restoration. The IPT presented a draft of the Louisiana Comprehensive Coastal Protection Master Plan Formulation Report to the following stakeholders: federal and state agencies, levee district representatives, parish representatives,



academia, non-governmental organizations, and consultants. In focus group discussions, the significant and immediate needs for a sustainable Louisiana coast and potential solutions to address those needs were discussed.

The day began with a plenary session introducing the plan purpose, planning principles, coastwide objectives, and the plan formulation process. Following the plenary session, the participants separated into groups, each of which discussed one of the five geographic "Planning

Units" (i.e. coastal regions delineated in the plan). Major discussion points were captured during each section, and emergent themes/issues were addressed. The comments and suggestions are being considered by the IPT for incorporation into the plan formulation process and the Louisiana Comprehensive Coastal Protection Master Plan.

Recommendations to Congress

As the Louisiana state legislature directed the CPRA to develop the state's comprehensive coastal protection annual and master plans, Congress directed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, in partnership with the State of Louisiana, to prepare in 24 months, a \$20 million report to identify, describe, and propose a full range of flood control, coastal restoration, and hurricane protection measures for south Louisiana. The Louisiana Coastal Protection and Restoration Project, known as LaCPR, includes, as directed by Congress, two reports: a six-month Preliminary Technical Report and a 24-month final report. The six-month report will serve as the basis for further work on the 24-month report. The CPRA's Integrated Planning Team and the Corps' LaCPR team are working together to assure the success of this project. The six-month LaCPR Preliminary Technical Report is under review by Washington level officials and is expected to be provided to Congress in early July. The congressional direction to the Secretary of the Army allows the submittal of "reports on component areas of the larger protection program for authorization as soon as practicable." The final 24-month LaCPR technical report

by the Corps is due to Congress in December 2007; however, reports recommending component areas of the larger protection program for authorization may be submitted at any time separately from these two reports.

The following five hurricane protection and coastal restoration projects are currently being considered by the State as recommendations to Congress for action before the final report is presented to Congress in December 2007:

- (1) Outer hurricane barrier to block storm surges originating east of Lake Pontchartrain
- (2) Closure of the MRGO to deep draft navigation, restoration of the extensive wetlands lost as a direct result of the MRGO, and integration of this closure into the hurricane protection plan
- (3) Authorization of the Morganza to the Gulf Hurricane Protection Project,
- (4) Contingent authorization and appropriations for preconstruction engineering and design of the Barataria Basin Barrier Shoreline ecosystem restoration project
- (5) Ecosystem restoration and storm surge buffer in southwest Louisiana.

These projects meet the following three criteria: they address a significant and immediate need, they have limited solution sets that address the need, and they identify actions for which broad-based stakeholder support exists.

Visit Our Website

The CPRA Integrated Planning Team has established a website as an informational resource. The website will include a calendar of events, CPRA Integrated Planning Team newsletters, and master plan related publications.

The website can be found at louisianacoastalplanning.org.



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